

This special report provides an overview of agency functions and summarizes the major activities of the North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department during 2002.

2002

North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department

State Parks Division

Major Accomplishments

Park visitation—An estimated 1,151,779 people visited North Dakota's state parks during the year, up about 8 percent from 2001 and the highest level since 1995. A major factor was increased use of state parks on Devils Lake, as well as Ft. Abraham Lincoln and Lake Sakakawea.

Campsite use—Campsite use rose 8 percent for the year, compared to 2001. Based on camping permits, 61 percent of park visitors were from North Dakota; 32 percent were out-of-state tourists; and 7 percent were Canadians. Use of parks by our Canadian neighbors was down 1 percent from last year, fueled by concerns about travel safety and border crossings.

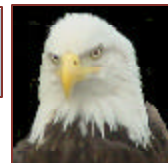
Centralized Reservation System—4,311 people made campsite reservations, the highest level since the department instituted a centralized reservation system. The system is managed by a private telemarketing firm in Williston.

FEMA Flood Recovery—Flood recovery work at both Grahams Island State Park on Devils Lake and Turtle River State Park near Arvilla was completed. At Grahams Island, a 50-unit campground was finished, the last of the relocation FEMA cost-share projects. Over \$1.8 million worth of facilities and infrastructure have been relocated in this park over the past five years. At Turtle River State Park, damaged by flooding in 2000, the final project, reconstruction of the historic CCC Woodland Lodge, was completed. Over \$1.3 million were spent on flood-related repairs at Turtle River.

Bridge Award—A bridge replacement project at Turtle River State Park won an Award of Grand Prize from the North Dakota Ready Mix & Concrete Products Association.

Special Events—The parks hosted over 60 special events during the summer, many with the support of community groups. Activities such as the Bluegrass Festival at Cross Ranch, CANDISC Bike Tour at Ft. Stevenson, and the American Legacy Expo at Ft. Abraham Lincoln helped draw out-of-state visitors to North Dakota.

Raptor Program, Lake Metigoshe State Park



Highlights

- Completed flood damage repairs at Turtle River, Devils Lake.
- Hosted over 60 special park events.
- Assisted in fire-fighting efforts in southwestern North Dakota.
- Lewis & Clark Bicentennial projects.
- Debut of Dakota Explorers children's program.

State Parks Division AT A GLANCE

- 10 year-round parks, 7 seasonal parks and 5 historic or natural areas.
- 17,002 total acres managed.
- Value of Park System fixed assets—\$30,058,189, including buildings and infrastructure.
- 2002 Visitation - 1,151,779.
- Direct economic impact—\$47,222,939 (\$41/visitor expenditures).
- Volunteer hours—32,099 hours.

Year in review

Wildfire Emergency—In response to a request by Governor John Hoeven, ten park employees and park equipment were reassigned to southwestern North Dakota to assist with firefighting efforts.

Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Projects—In preparation for the upcoming bicentennial celebration, outdoor amphitheatre projection buildings were constructed and equipped at the three state parks on Lake Sakakawea. In addition, a second campground at Lake Sakakawea State Park was renovated with new water and electrical service. Water service at the Ft. Abraham Lincoln State Park campground was also renovated, and construction of a new comfort station got underway.

Volunteers—Volunteers worked an estimated 32,099 hours during the year, including Campground Hosts, individuals and park support groups. Their efforts had an estimated value of over \$200,000 to the park system. Some of the projects made possible through volunteer support include the construction of new corrals at Little Missouri State Park; special events such as the Bluegrass Festival at Cross Ranch, Sodbuster Days at Ft. Ransom and Ft. Stevenson's Beach Party, staffing and exhibits at Icelandic State Park's Pioneer Heritage Center, and trail construction and maintenance projects at Turtle River and Ft. Ransom state parks.

On-A-Slant Village—Exhibits interpreting the Mandan lifestyle were installed in the earthlodges at Ft. Abraham Lincoln State Park. Park historians implemented a new guided walking tour of the village. A fifth earthlodge was constructed this past fall and will display information and exhibits on the archeology of this historic site.

Ft. Stevenson Guardhouse—A replica of the original Ft. Stevenson guardhouse was dedicated in June. Construction was funded by the Ft. Stevenson Foundation with a matching TEA-21 grant.

Cabins—A second log cabin was built at Cross Ranch State Park. At Turtle River State Park, three additional group cabins were renovated into duplex units. Nearly 5,000 people made use of cabin facilities, now available in nine state parks.

Beaver Lake State Park—The division resumed direct operation of Beaver Lake State Park near Napoleon, hiring a seasonal ranger and staff to bring the facility up to system standards. The park had been managed under a concessionaire lease agreement for the past four years.

Education—The division continued with its goal of enhancing educational opportunities in state parks with the introduction of the new Dakota Explorers Program. This hands-on children's program, offered in all parks, helps foster a greater appreciation for North Dakota's historical, cultural and natural resources.

Sunne Historic House—Work began on renovating the historic Sunne House at Ft. Ransom State Park. The

house will be used for the park's living history program, with an emphasis on homesteading life in the early 20th century.

Coulter Log Cabin,
Cross Ranch State Park



Year-round State Parks

Cross Ranch, Center

Ft. Abraham Lincoln, Mandan

Ft. Ransom, Ft. Ransom

Ft. Stevenson, Garrison

Grahams Island, Devils Lake

Icelandic, Cavalier

Lake Metigoshe, Bottineau

Lake Sakakawea, Pick City

Lewis & Clark, Williston

Turtle River, Arvilla

Seasonal Park & Rec Areas

Beaver Lake, Napoleon

Black Tiger Bay, Devils Lake

Doyle Memorial, Wishek

Indian Hills, White Shield

Little Missouri, Killdeer

Shelvers Grove, Devils Lake

Sully Creek, Medora

Historic/Natural Areas

Butte St. Paul, Bottineau

Crow Flies High, New Town

Elmwood Historic Home, Grafton

Head of the Mountain
Nature Preserve, Rutland

Sentinel Butte
Nature Preserve, Sentinel Butte



In addition to over 60 special events, state parks hold campfire and educational programs. Left, Greg Brooks (Gilby, ND) and his raptor program delighted visitors at Lake Metigoshe State Park in July.

Historic Woodland Lodge at Turtle River State Park, damaged during flooding in 2000, was dismantled and reconstructed on higher ground.



Exhibits interpreting the Mandan lifestyle were completed in the On-A-Slant Indian Village earthlodges at Ft. Abraham Lincoln State Park.

Park staff and equipment were assigned to southwest North Dakota to assist in fighting wildfires caused by extreme dry conditions.



Water Levels—Low water levels on Lake Sakakawea continued to impact use of both Ft. Stevenson and Lewis and Clark state parks. At Ft. Stevenson, concerns about the amount of water in the marina kept over 70 percent of the boat slips from being used. The marina at Lewis and Clark State Park was closed for the year, due both to low water and siltation. In contrast, boaters headed for Lake Sakakawea State Park, where access to the lake remains good.

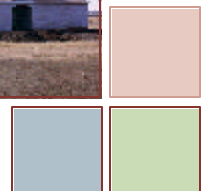
Administration Building—The staff at Lake Sakakawea State Park moved into a new administration building this past spring. Located near the park entrance road and visitor contact station, the building provides better opportunities for visitor services, fee collection and safety for entrance station workers. The move also provided the opportunity for the main concessionaire to take over the entire concession building to enlarge his operation.

Pembina County Museum—The new Pembina County Museum near Cavalier was completed and a ribbon-cutting ceremony held. The museum is located on state park land just south of Icelandic State Park's main entrance. This project is an example of joint state/local cooperation to bring tourism to the area.

Playground Equipment—Using a federal matching grant, playground structures were installed at Ft. Abraham Lincoln, Cross Ranch, Lake Metigoshe, Icelandic, Ft. Ransom and Grahams Island state parks.



Guardhouse, Ft. Stevenson State Park



Planning & Natural Resources Division

Major Accomplishments

Construction activities—Over 50 cyclic, general or emergency repair projects were completed in the state parks during 2002, with supervision and management of the projects sharing by the planning staff, department carpenters and park personnel. Some of the more critical projects completed included FEMA flood recovery projects at Devils Lake and Turtle River State Parks, construction of an administration building at Lake Sakakawea State Park, energy efficiency building projects at Lake Metigoshe State Park, and flood damage repair at the Ft. Abraham Lincoln State Park Visitor Center.

Resource Management Planning—A natural resource management plan was developed for Ft. Abraham Lincoln State Park, part of an ongoing process to develop plans for all state parks. The plans are working documents that provide guidance to park managers in making decisions to ensure appropriate park stewardship.

GPS & GIS Technology—Using GIS and GPS technology, data was collected to create maps of noxious weed infestations, rare species locations and state park trail systems. The trail mapping data collection, funded through the federal Recreation Trails Program, will be incorporated into trail map brochures, which will enhance recreational use of state park trails by visitors. Staff serves on the state GIS HUB Team.

Noxious Weed Monitoring & Control—Over 572 acres of noxious weeds were treated in 2002 as part of an ongoing project to control noxious weeds on state park lands. In addition, weed surveys were conducted at Elmwood, Stormy Lake and Indian Hills. The shorelines of Lewis and Clark, Lake Sakakawea and Ft. Stevenson state parks, and Crow Flies High and Indian Hills were surveyed for saltcedar, a noxious weed new to North Dakota. In addition, a buckthorn removal project continued at Ft. Ransom State Park. Buckthorn, an exotic shrub that crowds out native species, is being removed mechanically from the park.

Prairie Restoration—Long-term projects continued on restoring prairie areas at Lake Sakakawea and Ft. Stevenson State Park.

Education & Outreach—Projects included the development and distribution of plant checklists for all major parks, development of activity booklets for the children's Dakota Explorer Program, and the distribution of conservation trunks and films to parks for use in visitor education.

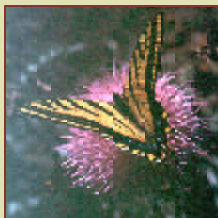
Nature Preserves Act—The division continued its prairie fringed orchid monitoring project in the Sheyenne National Grasslands, with funding from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. EPA-funded ecological plant community survey work continued in Griggs and Nelson counties. Information is entered into the department's biological conservation database system.

Planning & Natural Resources Division AT A GLANCE

- Park maintenance and major construction projects.
- Natural resource planning.
- Nature preserves & Natural Heritage Inventory
- Land stewardship
- Conservation education

Highlights

- Flood Recovery Project Management
- Natural Resource Management Plans
- Noxious weed control.
- GIS/GPS Support.



Thistle, a noxious weed

Recreation & Grants Division

Major Accomplishments

SCORP—The 2003-08 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was compiled. The plan is a guide for managing and developing North Dakota's recreation needs and is used in the awarding of federal Land & Water Conservation Fund grants. The plan also looked at state trail needs.

Land & Water Conservation Fund—29 communities were awarded matching grants from the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund for community outdoor recreation projects. North Dakota's share of the fund was \$1.2 million. Communities receiving grants included Watford City, Williston, Tioga, Crosby, Stanley, Bottineau, Mohall, Devils Lake, Cavalier, Walhalla, Grafton, Northwood, Horace, Ft. Ransom, Mapleton, Finley, Cooperstown, Valley City, Napoleon, Ashley, Sanborn, Beulah, Bismarck, Hazen, Dodge, Belfield, Regent and Mountrail and Sheridan counties. The program also funded projects by the State Historical Society of North Dakota and in various state parks.

Recreational Trails Program—Over \$625,000 was distributed to communities and trail groups through the federal Recreational Trails Program for the development and maintenance of public motorized and non-motorized trails. Major projects undertaken by the division included the development and printing of a Little Missouri River canoeing map.

State Snowmobile Trails Program—Lack of snow last winter hampered the opening of North Dakota's state snowmobile trails. The program, administered under a contract with Snowmobile North Dakota, encompasses over 3,600 miles of trails on public and leased private land.

Scenic Byways Program—Two additional state scenic byways—the Standing Rock Historical Scenic Byway along Highways 24 and 1806 and the James River Scenic Byway and Backway near Lamoure—were designated during the year. The joint DOT/NDP&RD program recognizes highways and roadways which feature unique scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archeological and recreation qualities. The routes are signed and shown on the official state highway map.

National Scenic Byway Designation—The Sheyenne River Valley State Scenic Byway and Backway was designated a National Scenic Byway. This 63-mile-long route in southeastern North Dakota along the Sheyenne River was the first state byway to apply for and receive national recognition.

Prairie Rose State Games—Nearly 3,500 state residents participated in the 2002 Prairie Rose State Games, held in Fargo. The games return to Bismarck in 2003. This program is managed through a contract with the host city, with oversight and direction from a board of directors and the department.

Highlights

- SCORP Completed
- Sheyenne Valley Declared National Scenic Byway.
- Nearly \$2 million in federal recreation & trails grants awarded.

State Recreation Priorities Identified in SCORP

Land Acquisition

Trails

Sports Courts

Playground & Picnic Areas

Pools & Beaches

Golf Courses

Sports Fields

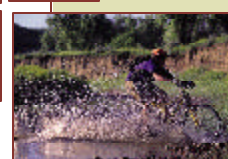
Campgrounds

Support Facilities

Historic Parks

Recreation & Grants Division AT A GLANCE

- Federal Recreation Grant Programs.
- Snowmobile & All-Terrain Vehicle Programs.
- Scenic Byways Program.
- Outdoor Recreation Planning.
- Trails Coordination.
- Prairie Rose State Games.



The Maah Daah Hey Trail is funded in part through the Recreational Trails Program.

Administrative Support Division

Major Accomplishments

Base Budget Research—Work continued on compiling base budget research. When completed, the research will provide a detailed look at the complexity of all state parks, staffing and operation needs and minimum park standards.

Risk Management Audits—Risk audits were completed for Ft. Ransom, Beaver Lake, Lake Metigoshe, Lewis and Clark, Doyle Memorial and Crow Flies High.

Information Technology—Pilot DSL (digital subscriber line) projects were initiated at Lake Sakakawea and Lewis and Clark state parks. DSL lines will improve information sharing between headquarters and the parks and eventually will allow the department to begin using e-commerce applications for campsite and facility reservations

Web Site Use—Nearly 90,000 people visited the department's public web site, www.ndparks.com, with a total of 1.1 million page "hits." New features on the web site include application forms for the L&WCF, Recreational Trails Program and the Campground Host program.

Administrative Division AT A GLANCE

- Information Technology.
- Accounting.
- Personnel.
- Public Information.
- Marketing & Promotion

Recreation One-Stop—The department became one of the first state park systems to add its data to *recreation.gov*, a federal initiative to expand and improve on-line access to government information and services. The initiative is developing a data exchange "architecture" so data can be exchanged seamlessly over the Internet.

Marketing & Promotion—State residents were encouraged to visit North Dakota's historic sites and state parks through a joint State Historical Society and Tourism Division ad campaign. In addition, staff promoted the state park system at both the Winnipeg and Bismarck winter sports shows, and helped fund a traveling display with MIND (Museums in ND).

Public Information—In addition to more than 50 press releases and articles, nearly 30,000 state residents were sent the spring and winter issues of the department's Discover newspaper. The division also produced new full-color park brochures for Icelandic and Ft. Abraham Lincoln state parks.

Awards—Henry Duray, Icelandic State Park manager, was awarded the department's Cal Renner Award of Excellence. The award, the department's highest honor, recognizes individuals whose efforts have contributed to the mission of the ND Parks & Recreation Department.

Twelve seasonal employees were recognized for their long-term employment. Special merit awards were presented to former Theodore Roosevelt National Park Superintendent Noel Poe, for his work in enhancing interagency cooperation, and to Ron Luethe for enhancing mountain biking opportunities in North Dakota.



Highlights

- Improved computer connectivity.
- Parks promoted on the web.
- Base budget research.

North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department

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